

Jack Pine *Warbler*

THE FALL ISSUE: Annual Crane Migration Is a Spectacular Sight ■ Protecting Big Marsh ■ Volunteers Help DNRE Biologists Band Woodcock ■ Saving the Wetlands One Stamp at a Time



Jack Pine Warbler

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Cover Photo ■ Sandhill Cranes

Photographer: © 2009 Tom Hodgson

Following a 1931 estimate by Michigan DNR that only 17 pairs of Greater Sandhill Cranes remained in southern Michigan, grassroots efforts began to help restore Michigan's historic population of the majestic birds. In 2009, nearly 10,000 birds were counted at Baker Sanctuary—a new record. Tom Hodgson, a volunteer with the Jackson Audubon Society, captured this image of Greater Sandhill Cranes near Haehnle Sanctuary in Jackson County, Michigan.

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MICHIGAN AUDUBON CONNECTS BIRDS AND PEOPLE FOR THE BENEFIT OF BOTH ...

... through conservation, education, and research efforts in the state of Michigan. Formed and incorporated in 1904, it is Michigan's oldest conservation organization. Michigan Audubon supports bird surveys throughout the state, publishes survey data, provides educational opportunities, and preserves nearly 5,000 acres of land within 19 sanctuaries as habitat for birds and other wildlife. The 41 chapters of Michigan Audubon focus on local conservation issues and provide educational programs within their communities. Contributions to Michigan Audubon are tax-deductible.



Executive Director's Letter

BIRD CONSERVATION IS COOL



AT A TIME when Michigan's landscape is being eyeballed for the development of everything from white-picket-fenced neighborhoods to wind farms, a drive through Calhoun County reminds one of how Michigan looked 50–100 years ago. The old mill in downtown Bellevue and the historic charm of nearby Marshall are indications that small-town America still exists in this south-central Michigan county. The land surrounding these communities is rural—a mixture of agriculture, residential, and protected areas.

One of those protected areas is the Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary. Only a sliver of Michigan's native grasslands exists in the state today. In October, Michigan Audubon will be conducting a controlled burn at the sanctuary to help restore a portion of the property to native grassland. We hope to quell the spread of invasive plant species while promoting the growth of beneficial natives, such as little bluestem and rudbeckia. Similar land management efforts were led by Mike Boyce during his tenure as Baker Sanctuary's resident manager.

Mike and his wife, Nancy, moved to Baker Sanctuary in 1994. The couple will be stepping away from the sanctuary in March 2011. The sanctuary afforded Mike the opportunity to hone his photography skills and advocate for the protection of birds in Calhoun County. During this period, Mike served a term as Convis Township Supervisor and fought against the installation of a guy-wired communications tower near the sanctuary. Both Mike and Nancy have been active members of the Battle Creek Brigham Audubon Society, serving in the roles of president and vice

president, and leading chapter members to prime birding locations such as Ohio's Crane Creek. Mike's affinity for and interest in the Greater Sandhill Crane led to the founding of CraneFest—a collaboration between the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek and Michigan Audubon that is now in its sixteenth year.

CraneFest XVI will be held Friday October 8 through Sunday October 10. Michigan Audubon will formally recognize the contributions of Mike and Nancy Boyce during a banquet dinner on Friday evening. In addition, author and professor Dr. Janice Hughes will give a presentation on her book, *Cranes: A Natural History of a Bird in Crisis*. Dr. Hughes will be available for book signings after the program.

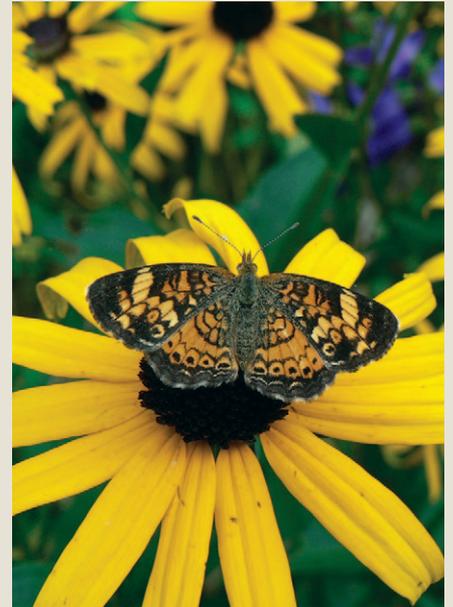
During the next six months, Baker Sanctuary will be in transition. The year-end controlled burn will leave a blank slate for spring wildflowers; the departure of Mike Boyce as resident manager will leave Michigan Audubon with a position to fill. We look forward to welcoming a new resident manager by May 1, 2011. Anyone interested in joining Michigan Audubon's conservation team, living and working in the organization's largest bird sanctuary, can contact conservation director Tom Funke (tfunke@michiganaudubon.org), for more information.

I look forward to seeing you at CraneFest—learn more and register for activities by visiting www.cranefest.org.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan E. Lutz'.

Jonathan E. Lutz



Black-eyed Susan with Pearl Crescent butterfly.
© 2008 Jonathan Morgan.



Annual Crane Migration Is a Spectacular Sight

BY WENDY TATAR

It's a cool, crisp October afternoon awash in the red, orange, and yellow hues of autumn. In the distance the stillness is pierced by the bugling "gar-oo-oo" of Michigan's largest bird. Soon you glance overhead as the world's oldest bird species glides into view. You are witnessing one of nature's most spectacular scenes as hundreds if not thousands of Sandhill Cranes return to Big Marsh Lake in Michigan Audubon's Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary.

There are six subspecies of *Grus canadensis*, commonly known as the Sandhill Crane. The subspecies that travels through and nests in Michigan is *Grus canadensis tabida*, or the Greater Sandhill Crane, which as the name implies is the largest of the subspecies. Birds stand 4.5 to 5 feet tall and weigh 10 to 14 pounds; males, on average, are 5 to 10 percent larger than the females. It's estimated that this subspecies' population numbers somewhere close to 100,000 birds and is currently increasing. This is good news, considering that only 1,000 members of the subspecies *tabida* remained in the United States in 1940, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Sandhill Cranes are the most abundant of the 15 crane species of the world. Three of the subspecies are migratory and three are resident birds that spend their entire lifetimes in the same area. The largest population (estimated at 400,000) is the subspecies *Grus canadensis canadensis*, or Lesser Sandhill Crane, the shortest of the subspecies. They're the birds seen migrating through the staging grounds on the Platte River in Nebraska. All three of the resident subspecies are on the endangered species list, with *Grus canadensis pulla*, or Mississippi Sandhill, in the most dire straits. It's estimated there are only 25 breeding pairs of Mississippi Sandhills left.

The Greater Sandhill Crane migrates to the southeast United States to spend the winter. Spring migration isn't as noticeable to Michiganders, because the birds tend not to gather in large roosting flocks as they do in autumn. In the fall, the birds leave their roosts at dawn and head to nearby harvested fields to feast on corn, beans, grain, and insects in order to fatten up for the next leg of their trip south. Some birds will arrive at the staging ground early in the fall; others hold off until late in the season to join the procession.

Seeing the crane fly-in will be only one of the highlights of the sixteenth annual CraneFest, to be held October 9 and 10. Although most of Big Marsh Lake is surrounded by Baker Sanctuary, it's not visible from there, so CraneFest is held at the adjoining Battle Creek Kiwanis Youth Area. The free event is hosted in cooperation with the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek, and the \$3 parking fee goes to support the Kiwanis Club's service projects.

The event begins at noon each day and ends at sunset, which in early October is approximately 7 p.m. The fly-in begins slowly around 4 p.m., with the best viewing of large numbers of birds between 5 p.m. and dusk. In 2009, a record number of cranes—close to 10,000 birds—were counted at Big Marsh Lake during the annual Michigan Fall Sandhill Crane Survey.

A wildlife art show and sale located on the grounds adds another dimension to CraneFest. Approximately 25 artists will have

artwork on display and for sale during the event. Artwork media include watercolor, oils, photography, wood, stone, clay, and pressed flower. Also on display will be artwork cranes created by students of Bellevue High School. A display of life-size cranes, painted by local artist Joanna Learner, represents all 15 crane species of the world.

Other activities at the event will include guided nature walks, educational presentations, and hands-on activities provided by local environmental groups. Live birds of prey and, if weather conditions allow, reptiles and amphibians will also be in attendance.

The festival site is 3.5 miles north of Cornwell's Turkeyville, on 15 Mile Road between T Drive North and Junction Road in north central Calhoun County just south of Bellevue.

Michigan Audubon's program director, Wendy Tatar, wrote this article. Contact her at wendy@michiganaudubon.org.

Lessons in Hope

On Friday evening October 8, Michigan Audubon will host a special prelude to CraneFest. A banquet dinner will be held at 6 p.m. at the Convis Township Hall, followed by a keynote presentation by Dr. Janice Hughes, author of *Cranes: A Natural History of a Bird in Crisis* (see review on page 6). This special evening will be a great start to CraneFest, now in its sixteenth year. Her presentation is entitled "The Recovery of the Whooping Crane: Lessons in Hope."

Dr. Hughes is a professor of biology at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. She is also author of two other books, the *Royal Ontario Museum Guide to the Birds of Ontario* (now in its third printing), and *Migration of Birds: Seasons on the Wing* (2009). Dr. Hughes is excited to be joining us. She states, "I am thrilled to have the opportunity to share this incredible experience with others."

Reservations for the keynote banquet are required and can be made by visiting www.cranefest.org. The cost for the meal and presentation is \$25 for Michigan Audubon members and \$30 for non-members.



Dr. Janice Hughes will give the keynote address at the CraneFest 2010 banquet dinner on Friday October 8.

Protecting Big Marsh Lake

BY TOM FUNKE

Big Marsh Lake: the name best reflects the habitat that attracts nearly 10,000 Sandhill Cranes—and just as many human enthusiasts—every fall. Those with long memories may remember that over fifty years ago this area was mostly marsh. On maps dated before 1960 the area was plainly labeled Big Marsh.

Flash back 15,000 years ago. Water from receding glaciers created a lake several square miles in size. The waters collected here eventually drained into the Battle Creek, which connects to the Kalamazoo River. Over time, the waters lowered to a point too shallow to sustain status as a lake and became a marsh.

From the glaciers' retreat until European settlement in the 1830s, the marsh ecosystem was surrounded by oak savanna and likely was a major stopover for migrating waterfowl, water birds, and quite possibly cranes. Over time, the wetland became shallower due to hydrology and the accumulation of vegetation. Its appeal to birds needing open water diminished. Today, Sandhill Cranes still nest in the marsh, but it's best known for the thousands that use it as a fall staging area.

The Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek had the foresight to purchase land adjoining Baker Sanctuary, to complement Michigan Audubon's efforts to provide crane habitat. In the early 1960s, an earthen impoundment was created on Ackley Creek, which raised the water in the marsh just enough to make sufficient depth to attract migrating cranes. Constructed of rocks and soil with a basic spillway (a corrugated tube), the impoundment allowed some manipulation of the water levels but impeded fish from moving freely through.



Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) cygnets. Huron River (Gallup Park), Ann Arbor, MI.



After 40-plus years, the earthen impoundment needed serious renovation, and in 2008, the water management system was upgraded. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Calhoun Conservation District, and Ducks Unlimited offered cash and technical assistance that helped leverage a \$38,936 North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This sum helped to replace the dilapidated water control structure, provide active water management of Big Marsh Lake, and re-establish 200 acres of quality wetland habitat for waterfowl and other wetland species.

In the summer of 2009, Ducks Unlimited coordinated the engineering and construction of the new water control structure, taking great care to ensure no long-term disruption of the marsh's flora and fauna. In early June, after peak waterfowl and water bird migration, all the boards were removed. The marsh quickly

LEFT: This first-of-its-kind water control device allows for upstream migration of fish into Big Marsh Lake, a 200-acre shallow wetland that is part of Michigan Audubon's Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary in Calhoun County. © 2009 Jonathan E. Lutz. **RIGHT:** Cranes © Cory Gildersleeve, 2006.



drained low enough for heavy equipment to remove the old structure and build the new one. Time was short, because Sandhill Cranes need enough water in which to stand, safe from predators; insufficient water in the marsh would cause the cranes to look elsewhere to stage. The summer was relatively dry, and it wasn't until a few weeks before CraneFest that significant rains filled the marsh to a sufficient level.

The new structure allows biologists to actively manage the wetland, promote aquatic plant growth, and mimic natural hydrologic regimes, increasing the diversity of wetland flora and fauna. It re-connected Big Marsh Lake to Ackley Creek, allowing fish passage to and from Big Marsh Lake.

“North American Wetland Conservation Act grants are a crucial funding source for conservation partnerships such as this one,” said Mike Sertle, Ducks Unlimited regional biologist. “Because of this funding opportunity, we [were] able to restore Big Marsh Lake to the highly productive wetland it once was, to the benefit of waterfowl and other wildlife.”

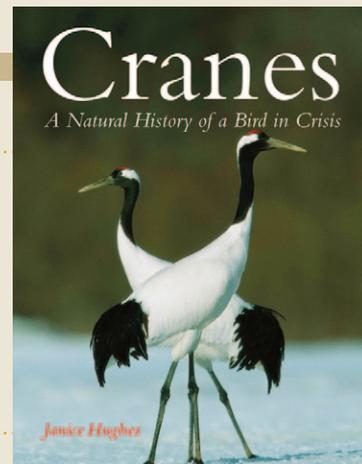
Tom Funke is Michigan Audubon's conservation director. He can be contacted at tfunke@michiganaudubon.org.

Book Corner

Cranes: A Natural History of a Bird in Crisis

BY JANICE M. HUGHES
(FIREFLY BOOKS, 2008, 256 PP.)

REVIEWED BY RONALD H. HOFFMAN



Few groups of birds can rival cranes' ability to fascinate us. Their beauty, grace, complex behavior, longevity, and rarity have won a place in people's hearts. It's little wonder then that numerous books have been written about them. Some of the more notable are Walkinshaw's *Cranes of the World* (Winchester Press, 1973), Johnsgard's *Cranes of the World* (Indiana University Press, 1983), and Matthiessen's *The Birds of Heaven: Travels with Cranes* (North Point Press, 2001). To this distinguished list, Dr. Janice Hughes has added *Cranes: A Natural History of a Bird in Crisis*.

The first chapter is devoted to the natural history of all 15 species of cranes. Beginning with mythology, folklore, and cultural importance, Dr. Hughes proceeds to describe general life history topics and ends with crane conservation. Readers will find explanations that go beyond just enumerating various features. For example, while discussing crane fossils she also describes the environmental conditions confronting gruiformes millions of years ago, including such monsters as "terror birds." In the anatomy physiology section, she describes how elongated windpipes are coiled in the breastbone of some species, which enables them to produce characteristic loud, trumpeting calls. She then compares that structure to the increasingly lower notes that are produced by incrementally closing the holes of a flute, and describes how the crane's tracheal coils act like the bridge of a violin to transmit tiny sounds to a large resonating chamber.

More than half of the book describes the decline and slow recovery of Whooping Cranes. From the brink of extinction in 1944-45, when only 21 remained, to 2006-07 when the population numbered 340, Dr. Hughes documents the roller coaster changes in numbers. The text is filled with anecdotal information that leads the reader to want more. I better understand the forces that motivated hunting after reading that the price for a Whooping Crane skin was \$8.00 in 1890 at a time when 12 cents would buy a pound of steak. Her description of the heroic efforts of Robert Porter Allen to better understand Whooping Cranes and to find their nesting grounds, unknown at that time, reads like a best-selling novel. The reader will learn about Allen's "bull blind" and how a picture of a Whooping Crane replaced a portrait of the famous Judge Roy Bean in a Texas saloon.

Dr. Hughes' extensive knowledge about migration is apparent in the chapter about efforts to reintroduce a migratory population. She traces the successes and failures of captive propagation, cross-fostering using Sandhill Cranes, costume rearing of young, vehicle- and then ultralight led migration, and soft and direct autumn release of young. We learn of the many dedicated people who were responsible for bringing back Whooping Cranes from the brink of extinction.

Each species is profiled in the last chapter. Appearance, distribution (including maps), seasonal movements, habitat, food habits, behavior and social interactions, reproduction, and conservation status are discussed for all 15 species. Unfortunately, the distribution map for Sandhill Cranes

does not show that nesting has been confirmed in New York, Ohio, and southern Ontario. She reports that most populations of Sandhill Cranes are stable and some are declining. However, it should be pointed out that the population of Sandhill Cranes is increasing in the Great Lakes area. These are minor discrepancies and detract little from the value of the book.

A six-page index at the end of the book will assist those wishing to locate photographs or information.

Cranes is richly illustrated, with 53 color photographs and 11 other illustrations. Many of the photos are truly stunning, and they alone make this a coffee table book one would be proud to own. Providing the names of cranes shown in all of the photographs would have been helpful.

Combining the glamorous crane family and the dramatic story of Whooping Cranes with spectacular photographs and Dr. Hughes' very readable prose makes for a winning combination. I highly recommend this book to people interested not only in cranes but in all aspects of nature as well.

After retiring from teaching high school biology, Ronald H. Hoffman worked for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Jackson County Conservation District. He earned a B.S. in biology and an M.S. in fisheries and wildlife from Michigan State University many years ago. He has authored numerous articles about Sandhill Cranes and has been deeply involved with Michigan Audubon sanctuaries. He may be contacted at ronandjoanhoffman@yahoo.com.



Kids' Corner

BY AMBER CROSS



I see little greenish brownish birds everywhere and I think they are cute. Today I saw one crawling in the crack of the roof at Meijer's. I think it was crawling to its nest. It makes sense because why else would it be there? It still seems too little to be there.

Another bird I like is the Bald Eagle (but I think it's ugly). They are cool to see but I don't see them much. They are the country's bird. I keep thinking that they are the state bird, but the Robin is. The only place that I've seen them is at the zoo and in pictures.

Amber is eight years old and worked with Michigan Audubon volunteer Anne Dorshimer on this story.

Thank you for your contribution, Amber! We are quite impressed with your knowledge that the Robin is Michigan's state bird. Did you know there's another bird that many folks in our state would like to be named the state bird? The Kirtland's Warbler, many feel, should replace the Robin because it's an endangered species and nests almost exclusively in Michigan.

—Michigan Audubon staff

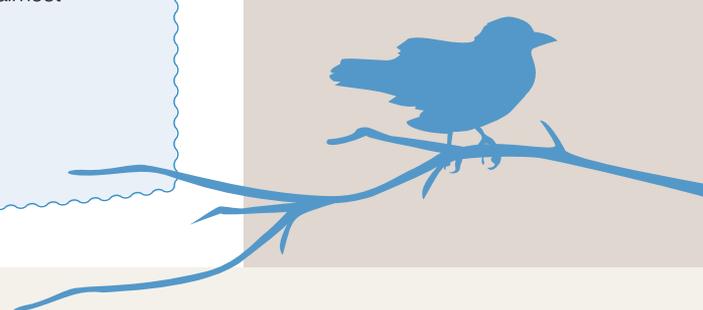
Calendar

September

- 11 **Migration Celebration**
Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary,
Manistee
- 18-19 **Hawk Fest,**
Lake Erie Metropark,
Brownstown

October

- 9-10 **CraneFest**
Kiwanis Youth Area,
Bellevue
- 16 **Sanctuary Open House**
Vorhees Sanctuary,
Marshall
- 23-24 **Trail Maintenance Workshop**
Bowman Lake



Special Thanks

As the annual Cerulean Warbler Weekend evolves into a premier birding event, its growth and success is due in part to the many helping hands that come together to produce a quality event. Michigan Audubon would like to thank all of the businesses, organizations, and individuals that assisted in making the 3rd annual Weekend so enjoyable for all.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Environment
Thorny River Kayak Co.

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute
Barry County Transit Authority
Barry County Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development Alliance

Dr. Scott Bloom
Platemate/Your Home Town USA, Inc.
Walldorff Brewpub
Hastings Big Boy Restaurant

J-Ad Graphics
Dr. Paul Hamel
Caleb Putnam
Greg Nelson and Mary Ortiz
Jonathan Morgan

Ranger Steve Mueller
John Lerg
Ben Stapish
Richard Yarsevich

Targeted species at this event are of course Cerulean Warbler, but also Henslow's Sparrow, Common Loon, the Acadian, Alder, Willow, and Least Flycatchers, and both Yellow and Black-billed Cuckoo. All species were seen this year and many participants added to their life lists. Participants came from all over Michigan, as well as from Illinois, Missouri, Colorado, Georgia, Washington, Canada, and England. The most exciting sighting of the event was a female Cerulean Warbler building her nest—a rare opportunity indeed.

Mark your calendars for June 3-5, 2011 for the 4th annual Cerulean Warbler Weekend, so that you too may find that elusive bird and add to your list.

Volunteers Help DNRE Biologists Band Woodcock

BY BOB GWIZDZ

For the majority of pointing dog enthusiasts, nothing compares to autumn, when hunting season is open and hunters can spend days with their best friends in pursuit of upland birds. But for a small minority of bird dog aficionados, there's even more fun to be had in spring.

Spring is the other bird season: banding season, when hunters exchange their firearms for landing nets and pursue Woodcock with the express purpose of capturing and releasing them as soon as they've been festooned with small metal leg bands.

From April until June, a small contingent of dedicated bird dog owners takes to the wood lots of Michigan to locate and band the needle-nosed migrants. The bands that are returned by hunters

A Woodcock demonstrating the art of camouflage. © 2010 Dave Kenyon.



Banders work quickly to minimize stress to the Woodcock chicks. © 2010 Dave Kenyon.

provide important information to wildlife managers about the population, distribution, and life history of woodcock.

Woodcock are migratory birds that are more closely related to shore birds than they are to other upland game birds, but have adapted to forested habitat. Woodcock prefer early-age forests with moist soils.

They are mottled brown birds with long beaks that they use to feed by probing the moist earth for invertebrates. Woodcock are so well camouflaged that their first instinct when approached is to freeze—which makes them perfect for pursuit with pointing dogs.

Michigan leads the nation in Woodcock banding, largely because of its volunteer army of Woodcock banders. Every year, volunteers spend more than 1,000 hours in Michigan wood lots, banding 1,000 or more recently hatched Woodcock.

Michigan has been in the forefront of banding since 1960, when federal wildlife officials asked state natural resources agencies in Woodcock production states to help band large numbers of Woodcock for a population study. Michigan wildlife biologist G. A. “Andy” Ammann participated in the banding effort and helped refine the technique of using pointing dogs to locate Woodcock broods.

By 1965, six people (mostly professional wildlife biologists) were actively banding woodcock in Michigan. Over time, Ammann and others trained

volunteers and by the mid-1990s, there were about 100 volunteers banding woodcock in the state.

The drill is fairly simple: volunteers take to the forests with their dogs. The dogs point nesting or brooding Woodcock hens. Using long-handled nets, the volunteers capture the hens if they can, then band and release them. They also look for nests or chicks on the ground.

When a brooding hen is flushed, she'll typically fly just a short distance and then feign a broken wing, a behavior designed to draw the bander away from the chicks. It's a tip-off to banders that chicks are present.

The mottled brown and yellow chicks blend perfectly into the early spring vegetation; it takes eagle eyes to spot them as they remain motionless, waiting for the perceived danger to pass. After the banders have searched the area visually, they gently pick up whatever chicks they've found. That usually prompts the chicks to



Banding a juvenile Woodcock in spring. © 2010 Dave Kenyon.

start peeping; the calls typically spur the remaining chicks to begin running, making them more visible.

The banders work quickly to minimize stress to the chicks. They measure the beak to help determine its age. (Woodcock are born with a 14 mm beak, which grows 2 mm a day). They attach a thin metal band with a serial number to the chick's leg and record all relevant data. When they're released, the hen and chicks soon reunite. In fact, many Woodcock banders recount having a hen fly back and sit nearby while the chicks are banded.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) issues permits to allow individuals to band Woodcock. Would-be banders must attend a mandatory workshop, study under the guidance of an experienced bander, and have their dogs certified as able to perform the task without jeopardizing the birds' safety.

Randy Strouse, a retired, skilled tradesman in an auto plant, has been banding Woodcock since 1991. Strouse says he tries to spend at least 60 hours in the woods banding each spring and usually bands more than 50 birds, though he has surpassed 80 in some years.

"I hunt, just like anyone else, but if I see a Woodcock on the ground and it has a band, I won't shoot it when it flushes," Strouse said. "If it's this year's bird, you wouldn't be able to gather any information from it."

Strouse will gladly tell you he'd rather band Woodcock than hunt them. "The banding community really likes doing this," Strouse said. "If I had to give up one or the other, I'd give up hunting."

Banding Woodcock makes it possible for hunters to contribute to conservation efforts in a hands-on manner. And it makes the whole effort practical. "Without the volunteer banders, we wouldn't be able to band anywhere near the number of Woodcock we band each year," said Al Stewart, the DNRE's upland game bird specialist. "It's the main reason Michigan leads the nation in the number of Woodcock banded."

Bob Gwizdz is a career journalist who joined the staff of the DNRE after retiring from the newspaper industry. He can be reached at gwizdzb@michigan.gov.

Inquiring Birders

Q: Dear Michigan Audubon, I had heard that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNRE) recently opened a season to hunt Sharp-tailed Grouse in the eastern Upper Peninsula. Is this true and can we expect conflicts with the many birders that travel to the Whitefish Point area each year to look for Sharp-tails and Spruce Grouse in those woods? Thank you, in advance, for your response.

Submitted via the Michigan Audubon website by SEMIBirder235

A: Dear SEMIBirder235, On May 12, 2010, the MDNRE announced the following:

"The Natural Resources Commission has approved a limited hunting season for sharp-tailed grouse in the eastern end of the Upper Peninsula, the first open season for the upland birds since 1996.

The season [had been] closed after surveys of known breeding grounds—commonly called 'leks'—indicated a declining population. Subsequent research by university and Department of Natural Resources and Environment personnel, however, indicates that Sharp-tails are less faithful to their traditional leks than originally thought and their population is likely much larger...

DNRE personnel will conduct annual surveys in the Sharp-tailed Grouse range in the area open to hunting, as well as west of the open area, to monitor population trends."

The new hunting season for Sharp-tailed Grouse in Michigan runs from October 10–31, with a daily bag limit of two, a possession limit of four, and a season limit of six. We recommend that if you plan to bird-watch for grouse during this time, visit www.michigan.gov/dnrhunting for specific boundaries of the area where grouse hunting will take place.

Thanks for writing.

Jonathan Lutz, Michigan Audubon's executive director, answered this question.

Send questions to Birds@MichiganAudubon.org

Websitings

Saving the Wetlands One Stamp at a Time

BY MICHELLE BARBER

As a reader of the *Jack Pine Warbler*, you are undoubtedly interested in preserving wildlife and helping to protect the homes of your favorite winged creatures. Purchasing the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (more commonly known as the Duck Stamp) is one fun way to achieve this goal.

The Duck Stamp serves as a hunting license for any one over the age of 16 who wishes to hunt migratory fowl. But the stamp does much more than that. Birders and others who enjoy the serenity of National Wildlife Refuges will be rewarded with free admission to the refuges when presenting the stamp, and the stamp works to preserve wetlands—the homes of these majestic birds—while serving as a collector's item and providing a pass for entertainment.

How does it accomplish all this? The stamps are produced by the U.S. Postal Service for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and can be purchased for \$15. Although they cannot be used for postage, ninety-eight cents of every dollar of their price are given to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. This means that of your \$15 spent to purchase the stamp, \$14.70 goes directly to the wetlands.

What does this money do for the birds? The Migratory Bird Conservation Fund is used to award millions of dollars in grants to create or restore wildlife habitat. Since the initiation of the stamp in 1934, more than three-quarters of a billion



A restored wetland at Michigan Audubon's Haehnle Sanctuary in Jackson County. © 2008 Ron Hoffman.

dollars directly from stamp revenue have been used to protect more than five million acres of habitat for migratory birds (1). In Michigan, revenue from the Duck Stamps has recently been used for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, the Seney National Wildlife Refuge, and the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge (2). While the specific needs of these three refuges are different, similar needs for each have been met with this money. Specifically, land has been purchased and maintained for the distinct purpose of preserving wildlife.

In addition to the regular Duck Stamp, the Fish and Wildlife Service also offers the Junior Duck Stamp Program. This program is a contest for grades K-12. The challenge is to design a piece of art featuring North American waterfowl. The first-place winners from each state advance to the national contest, where one is chosen to be printed. This year's Junior Duck Stamp features the beautiful Hooded Merganser (3).

Interested? There are a variety of ways these stamps can be purchased. An order form that can be submitted by mail may be downloaded from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website Duck Stamp page (4). You can also order your stamp by phone (5), or at most sporting stores where fishing and hunting licenses are sold. But in today's digital age, why not purchase a stamp online? They are available at the Duck Stamp's website (6). The regular stamps (both self-adhesive and gummed) as well as the Junior Duck Stamp are available here.

With the Duck Stamp, you can enjoy collecting, and at the same time feel good about the good you are doing.

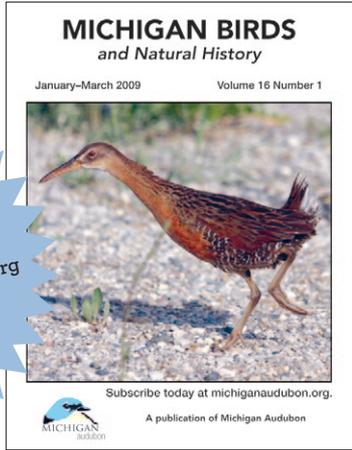
Visit these sites:

- (1) www.allaboutbirds.org/NetCommunity/LbPrintPage.aspx?print=2954&pid=149&type=aab
- (2) www.fws.gov/duckstamps/Conservation/states/Michigan/Michigan.htm
- (3) www.fws.gov/juniorduck/
- (4) www.fws.gov/duckstamps/
- (5) www.fws.gov/duckstamps/stamps.htm
- (6) www.duckstamp.com/mm5/



When birders purchase a duck stamp, they support preservation of wetlands and receive free admission to wildlife refuges. © 2006 Mike Boyce.

Michelle Barber (barberm7@msu.edu) is a professional writing senior at Michigan State University. She enjoys few things more than lounging at the lake, feeding the ducks as they swim past.



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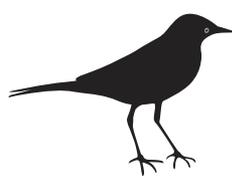
A one-volume subscription to Michigan Audubon's research journal is only \$25.00.

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Got good bird photos? Want to get them published in this magazine? Then send them to us! The Michigan Audubon is always on the lookout for great bird photography.



2010 Member Benefits

BENEFITS & GIFT LEVELS	\$30	\$50	\$100	\$500	\$1K+
Michigan Audubon membership, including a one-year subscription to the <i>Jack Pine Warbler</i> (6 issues)	■	■	■	■	■
10% discount in the Michigan Audubon bookstore	■	■	■	■	■
Discounts at selected Michigan Audubon events	■	■	■	■	■
Recognition in our Annual Report	■	■	■	■	■
Embroidered Michigan Audubon member patch*	■	■	■	■	■
One night of lodging at the Lake Bluff or the Otis Sanctuary			■	■	■
VIP invitation, Michigan Audubon conference				■	■
Nameplate at a Michigan Audubon bird sanctuary					■
Invitation to a donor recognition luncheon					■

*Applies to new members only

We Welcome New Michigan Audubon Members

We thank you—our newest members as well as our renewing members—for your support of Michigan Audubon's bird conservation efforts.

Warren Alward
Rob & CiCi Birnberg
Michael & Heidi Boyd
Barbara Bracher
Dawn Bush
Steve & Beth Duede
Sherman Garnett
Suzanne Johnson
Robert R. Lee & Ann R. Thomas
Sandy & Doug Leffler
Ann Liming

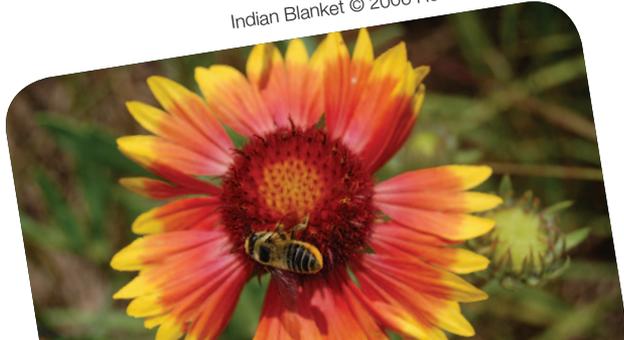
Robert & Maria MacFarlane
Nathan Martineau
Vicky McCombs
Todd Moskovitz
Ashley Moerke & Chris Scherwinski
John Murphy
Patricia A. Piechowski
Connors
Mancino's Pit Stop
Tom Ragonese

Stephan Sage
Barbara Shepard
Jim & Barb Smith
Jennifer Smith
Jennifer Soria
Mrs. Charles Walker
Mary Ann Whiting-Raske
Mr. Jack'ss Sports Bar & Grill
Laughing Whitefish Audubon Society

Please remember to check your expiration date and renew early. If you share your *Jack Pine Warbler* with friends, family, and neighbors, please encourage them to use the enclosed remittance envelope to join you in your support of Michigan Audubon. Members moving or changing to a seasonal residence should contact the office by phone, post, or e-mail so that we can update your address in our database.

Announcements

Indian Blanket © 2006 Ron Hoffman.



Events

Trail Maintenance Workshop Scheduled

The art of planning, installing, and maintaining a trail to National Scenic Trail standards will be the topic of a 2-day workshop to be presented by Rich Krieger, Lake Bluff resident manager on the weekend of October 23–24. Beginning at 1 p.m. on Saturday and ending at noon on Sunday, participants in the hands-on workshop will look at trail structure in different terrains, discuss building materials, and work on a variety of maintenance issues, etc.

The workshop will be held at Bowman Lake, approximately seven miles west of Baldwin. Participants will primitive camp overnight in the forest. The suggested donation for the workshop is \$30 for Michigan Audubon members and \$50 for non-members. Register online at www.michiganaudubon.org through the event calendar page. The workshop is limited to ten participants.

Participate in the Michigan Fall Sandhill Crane Survey

Volunteers are being sought to help count the fall population of Sandhill Cranes in Michigan. Since 1979, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has conducted a survey of the eastern crane populations, including those in Michigan. The number counted in Michigan has increased from 757 in 1979 to 24,445 last year (see *Michigan Birds and Natural History* for more details).

The 2010 survey will be conducted on Friday October 29. Cranes tallied either leaving or returning to their night roosting sites are preferred, but if that's not possible, then they may be counted in fields during the day. If you would like to help and for more information, contact Ron Hoffman at 517-769-6891 or ronandjoanhoffman@yahoo.com.

Fall landscape at Otis © 2008 Tom Funke



Events

Crane Viewing Opportunities

If you're looking to see Sandhill Cranes but your schedule won't allow you to attend CraneFest, there are several other opportunities available. Each weekend in October, the Kiwanis Youth Area near Bellevue will be open to the public from 4–7 p.m. This property, owned by the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek and the location of CraneFest, offers the best viewing of Big Marsh Lake, the staging area which attracts the most Greater Sandhill Cranes in Michigan.

Each evening before sunset, thousands of cranes fly into Big Marsh Lake to roost for the night. Either they have been flying from either northern nesting location or spent the day in nearby farm fields feasting on the remnants of corn, beans, and other recently harvested crops, putting on much-needed fat for their journey to the southeastern U.S.

Open House at Vorhees Sanctuary

For the past six months students from the Mar-Lee School have adopted Michigan Audubon's Vorhees Sanctuary. The students have been working with their teacher, Rockne Findley, to establish trails through the sanctuary, develop a plant and wildlife identification/survey, and create interpretive signage for the trails. Michigan Audubon member and Vorhees steward Jim Hewitt has been assisting the students.

You have the opportunity to see the great work these young people are doing by attending an open house at the Vorhees Sanctuary on Saturday, October 16 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Students will be there to help lead walks through the sanctuary.

Vorhees Sanctuary is a 40-acre property located in Lee Township, Calhoun County, approximately six miles northeast of Marshall. The sanctuary entrance is at the intersection of 24 Mile Road and O Drive North. For more information check the Michigan Audubon online event calendar or call Wendy at 517-886-9144.

Information

Historical Marker Salutes Kirtland's Warbler

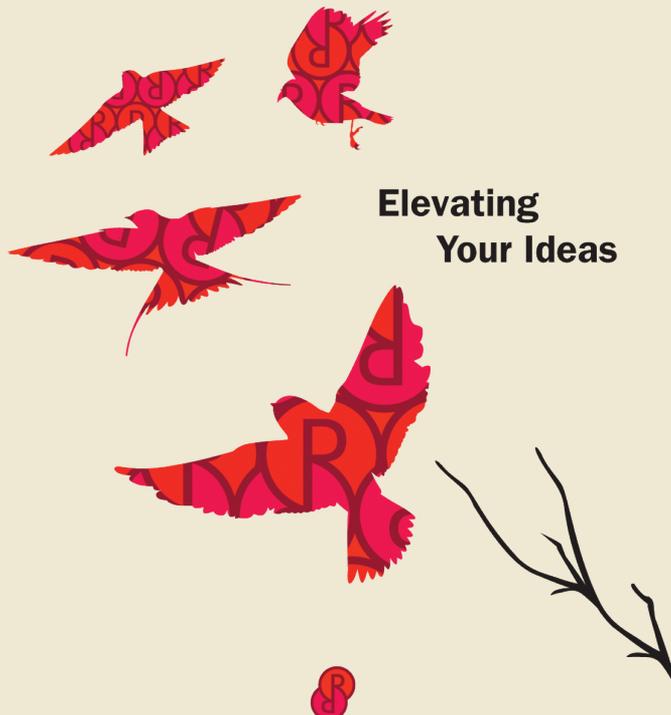
The second marker on Michigan's Conservation Trail has been installed recently at the MDOT rest area at the junction of northbound I-75 and US-127 near Grayling. This new historical marker commemorates the recovery of the Kirtland's Warbler. The marker is a result of a collaborative effort between the Michigan Historical Commission, the Michigan Environmental Council, and the State Historic Preservation Office. The marker reads:

The Kirtland's Warbler was first identified in 1851 from a specimen collected on Dr. Jared Kirtland's Ohio farm. The birds originally depended on fire-created young jack pine forests for summer nesting. Such forests in northern Michigan became their prime global summer breeding habitat. Kirtland's Warbler faced extinction due to the loss of habitat and the invasion of parasitic brown-headed cowbirds, which lay eggs in warbler nests and whose young survive at the expense of warbler nestlings. The warbler was placed on the federal endangered species list in 1967 and the state endangered species list in 1976. Guided by research to mimic natural fire processes, government agencies and private conservationists began harvesting older jack pine stands and replanting the trees to restore the warblers' habitat. In addition, cowbird populations were controlled. From an all-time modern low of 167 nesting pairs in 1974 and 1987, the summer population of the warbler rebounded to more than 1,700 pairs in 2007. The recovery of the species testifies to the effectiveness of habitat restoration efforts. During the winter the songbirds leave Michigan for the Bahamas.

This is the second marker on the trail. The first, located at the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge in Trenton, commemorates the Detroit River and celebrates the efforts of conservationists and sporting groups that worked together to pass tougher state water pollution laws.

Bird Carvings on Display

Lifelong birder and Michigan Audubon member Jim Ponshair is a wood carver from Allendale. Some know Jim for his work maintaining the bluebird houses at the Muskegon Waste Water Treatment Facility or his involvement with the Grand Rapids Audubon Club. Over 150 of Jim's bird carvings are currently on display at Grand Haven's Tri-Cities Historical Museum Centennial Hall as part of "Birds of a Feather: Exploring the Birds of Michigan" exhibit. The exhibit opened in April, will run until October, and is free of charge. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday, 9:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 12:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m. The museum is located at 200 Washington St. in downtown Grand Haven. Call 616-842-0700 for hours, location, and additional information.



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Program Schedule

The following program will be held at **Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary (located near Bellevue):**

Sept. 11 Wildflower Hike 3:00 p.m.

These programs will be held at the **Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary (located near Hastings):**

Sept. 18 Marvels of Migration 9:00 a.m.

Oct. 2 Tree Identification Hike 10:00 a.m.

Oct. 23 Color Tour 9:00 a.m.

Lake Bluff will host the following programs:

Sept. 7–11 Migration Celebration activities, various times

Sept. 25 Fall Mushrooms 9:00 a.m.

Oct. 16 Color Tour 9:00 a.m.

Nov. 6 Gull Identification 9:00 a.m.

For detailed information, visit www.michiganaudubon.org.

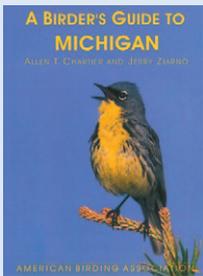
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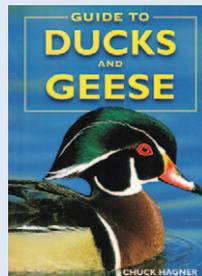


A Birder's Guide to Michigan: ABA Birdfinding Guide

by Allen T. Chartier and Jerry Ziarno
\$28.95

Hot off the presses: a second printing of the book needed to find Michigan's birding hotspots. Chartier and Ziarno provide an excellent tool for birding in Michigan by detailing over 200 of Michigan's best birding sites and

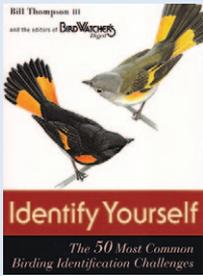
providing information about how to find many boreal specialties. Filled with maps, bar-graphs, and an annotated list of specialty species, this book should be on the wish list of every Michigan birder.



Guide to Ducks and Geese

by Chuck Hagner
\$21.95

This guide offers large photos of every species of North American ducks and geese, along with descriptions of their behaviors, characteristics, and calls. Also includes a chapter on those closely related species: loons, grebes, and other waterbirds that you see while looking for ducks and geese.

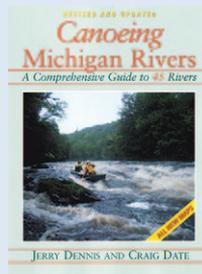


Identify Yourself: The 50 Most Common Birding Identification Challenges

by Bill Thompson III and the editors of *Bird Watcher's Digest*
\$19.95

Still having difficulty distinguishing one plover from another? Do the Accipiters confound you? This may be the book for you. Thompson et. al have compiled the

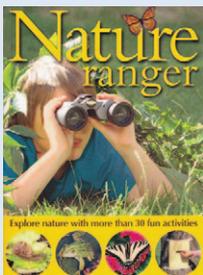
solution to many of North America's bird ID challenges. Illustrated by Julie Zickefoose, the book shows key field marks and comparison illustrations that help you to distinguish those species that are difficult to tell apart.



Canoeing Michigan Rivers: A Comprehensive Guide to 45 Rivers

by Jerry Dennis and Craig Date
\$21.95

Revised and updated since its original 1986 publication, this book provides accurate, easy-to-follow maps to the best Michigan rivers for canoeing. The authors have personally paddled every mile and provide all the data needed to make your excursion a fun and safe experience



Nature Ranger

by Richard Walker
\$9.99

From simple observation to ambitious experiments requiring adult supervision, from casting tracks to pressing flowers, the 30-plus activities in this book will provide hours of entertainment for children. Part of the DK Nature Activities series that also includes Bird Watcher and Bug Hunter.

Order by phone, mail, or e-mail

By phone. Visa or MasterCard. Phone 517-886-9144.

By mail. Send name, address, phone number, and payment to Michigan Audubon Bookstore, 6011 W. St. Joseph Hwy., Ste. 403, Lansing, MI 48917. Prepayment includes list price + 6% sales tax + \$3.25 postage and handling for the first item + \$.85 for each additional item.

By e-mail. Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org.

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